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<b>15. Abstract:</b> Maritime Interception Operations (MIO) as a mission area for USN and USCG assets does not seem to be going away anytime soon. The purpose of this essay is to assess past MIO efforts and offer recommendations to assist the operational commander in making MIO more effective.  MIO can and will be more successful than it has been in the past decade, if the operational commander integrates a more complete study of the operational factors of space, time, and force in the initial planning phase. Past MIO examples indicate that the full assessment of these three factors have either come too late or were not thorough enough to achieve its full potential.  Prior to the initial planning phase, the operational commander should fully develop these three operational factors in order to answer three fundamental questions: (1) Can MIO effectively produce the political objective or desired end state? (2) What other instruments of national power will also be required? (3) How will operational functions need to be tailored or implemented to make the operation more effective?  MIO continues to be a popular political military operation other than war to achieve a desired end state or means to impose and enforce UN sanctions. In our quest to make MIO more effective I feel we need to return to the fundamentals of operational art and widen the scope of the situational assessment. Such an assessment in each scenario will determine if and how MIO can be an effective means to attain our political objectives.			
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NAVAL WAR COLLEGE  
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**A TASK NO MARITIME OPERATIONAL COMMANDER WANTS: MARITIME  
INTERCEPTION OPERATIONS (MIO) ARE NOT GOING AWAY**

by

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A paper submitted to the faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

03 February 2003

## PREFACE

### From the Blockade to Maritime Interception Operations (MIO)

The terminology associated with MIO today originates from the classic naval blockade and can often be confusing. For hundreds of years the naval blockade was frequently implemented and utilized by nations to exert military, economic, and political force on other nations prior to, during, and post hostilities. With the establishment of the Charter of the United Nations on 26 June 1945 and as per the Law of Naval Operations, the naval blockade was further defined and limited to operations conducted by belligerent nations.<sup>1</sup> Recognizing that economic sanctions in the form of naval embargoes were still a viable diplomatic tool, and more recently a legitimate form of UN-mandated peacekeeping operations, we have seen such terms as embargo, quarantine, and most recently MIO defined as possible measures to be implemented short of declared war.<sup>2</sup> Today, MIO is defined as: “The legitimate action of denying merchant vessels access to specific ports for import/export of prohibited goods to/from a specific nation or nations, for the purpose of peacekeeping or to enforce imposed sanctions.”<sup>3</sup> It should be noted that Naval Publications use the same acronym, MIO, for Maritime Interdiction Operations and Maritime Interception Operations. For this paper, since both terms use the exact same terminology in defining the purpose of such operations, they will be considered the same.

Anyone studying joint maritime operations, who doubts the validity of Maritime Interception Operations (MIO) as a legitimate mission area for the U.S. Navy and Coast Guard, need only look as far as the employment of U.S. forces over the past decade. Since 1990, Department of Defense (DOD) forces have conducted joint MIO in support of the United Nations (UN) and national interests in the Adriatic against the former Republic of Yugoslavia, in the Red Sea and Persian Gulf against Iraq, in the Caribbean against Haiti, and throughout the Caribbean and Eastern Pacific in support of Counter Drug (CD) operations. Today, in addition to continued multi-national operations against Iraq and CD operations, MIO has been expanded to include Leadership Interception Operations (LIO) of individuals and shipping associated with Al Queda and the Taliban. Clearly, MIO as a mission does not seem to be going away any time soon. Yet the success of these operations has not been what one might expect from the most capable naval forces in the world. In fact these operations have proven extremely challenging and expensive in terms of resources and the amount of time invested to produce favorable results.

The limited success of these operations begs the question; “What aspect of Operational Art must be better analyzed and assessed during the planning phase to make MIO more effective?” MIO can and will be more successful than it has been in the past decade, if the operational commander integrates a more complete study of the operational factors of space, time, and force in the initial planning phase. A more complete study and analysis of the operational factors will ultimately help answer three crucial questions: Can MIO effectively produce the political objective or end state? What other instruments of national power will also be required? How will operational functions be tailored or implemented to make the operation more effective?

The intent of this paper is not to prove that the operational factors of space, time, and force were not considered and utilized in past MIO efforts. Instead, I will identify examples where had the initial assessment been expanded or more complete, the planning and execution would have been more effective in terms of the time and effort spent. In some cases, such an assessment would have illustrated a need for additional instruments of national power and/or operational function requirements. To demonstrate such examples, I have focused my research on two ongoing MIO efforts. The first example will be the MIO in support of UN sanctions against Iraq in the Persian Gulf. The second will be the CD Operations in the Caribbean and Eastern Pacific. Although categorized as a Law Enforcement Operation (LEO) by definition, I have chosen to use the CD operations due to the similar mission, challenges, command structure, and involvement of DOD and Coast Guard assets which are relevant to the scope of this paper. The first factor I shall examine is that of space.

### The Factor of Space

Space is perhaps the most critical and complex of the three operational factors when planning MIO operations. As Milan Vego wrote; “*Military history is replete with examples of campaigns and major operations that failed because the factor of space was either neglected or unrealistically assessed.*”<sup>4</sup> Unlike the factor of force and even time to a degree, the space in which MIO are to be conducted are dictated by the region in which they will occur. The examination of the operating space should be the starting point for planning MIO operations. The associated geography, water space, political climate, and merchant traffic density are but a few of the aspects of space that must be accurately assessed and analyzed

prior to commencing planning. The current CD operations and the operations in support of the UN sanctions against Iraq illustrate two aspects of space that required further examination; size of the operating area and the impact of nations with adjacent territorial seas. Had these aspects been further analyzed, the operational commanders would have recognized the need for additional national power in the form of diplomacy and redefined operational functions.

Size of the operating area will play a pivotal role in determining the scheme of maneuver for search, detection, and intercept as well as the logistical support required. In other words, it will shape some of the operational functions, such as logistics, maneuver and mobility, intelligence, and command and control (C2). Currently CD operations cover the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico and the Eastern Pacific encompassing over 6 million square miles. Rear Admiral Riutta, USCG, stated before Congress in 1998: “*The task of maintaining a comprehensive overview of activity and sorting targets of interest from legitimate air and surface traffic is daunting. Equally difficult is the challenge of supporting our forces in such an expansive theater of operations, particularly in the Eastern Pacific.*”<sup>5</sup> In this case the operating area was so large that it had to be broken down into what is currently called the source or departure zone, transit zone, and U.S. arrival zone.<sup>6</sup>

The first CD operations conducted by the Coast Guard and Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) in the early 1970’s focused on the U.S. arrival zone along the coast of Florida and in the Gulf of Mexico. At this point smuggling tactics were not very advanced and their aim was to overwhelm interception efforts by sheer volume alone.<sup>7</sup> As smuggling tactics adapted and became more advanced, the Coast Guard implemented their “Choke Point Strategy” in the late 1970’s to target the transit zone.<sup>8</sup> As the operating area continued to expand, it was quickly recognized that the Coast Guard and DEA simply did not have enough assets alone.

Throughout the 1980's the role of DOD assets continued to expand in supporting CD operations. By 1989, DOD was assigned as the lead agency for all Detection and Monitoring (D&M) of drug shipments into the United States.<sup>9</sup> As smuggling routes and tactics continued to develop and emerge throughout the 1990's the operating areas grew incrementally.

The sheer size of the CD operating area today dictates the need for a much larger and complex command structure and scheme of maneuver then ever envisioned initially. The Coast Guard “*implemented the campaign “Steel Web” in 1996, a multiyear strategy to achieve the goals of the National Drug Control Strategy (NDCS).*”<sup>10</sup> The CD campaign now includes Joint Interagency Task Force (JIATF) East and West, supporting each other in surge operations targeted at various regions of the transit zone. At the same time, they support the U.S. Southern Command’s operation “Laser Strike” which targets the source and departure zone in South America.<sup>11</sup> Unable to cover the entire campaign area, surge operations, based on trend analysis and intelligence cuing have proven quite successful in intercepting the most amount of drugs given the space and number of assets available. This has forced smugglers to spend time and effort establishing new shipping routes, and spend money developing advanced technology.<sup>12</sup> These efforts are supporting the NDCS clearly stated mid-term objective to reduce the rate at which illegal drugs successfully enter the U.S. by 10 percent in 2002 and the long term goal of 20 percent by 2007.<sup>13</sup> It seems that we have now established the required command structure and scheme of maneuver to accommodate the space involved but there has been a significant cost in terms of time.

What is alarming is the fact that it has taken over 25 years to accomplish the minimum objective. In this case, a more comprehensive study of the operating area and estimation of how it might expand would have saved considerable time and effort.

Operational functions could have been shaped to cover not only near term but long term operations as well. For example, the appropriate command structure could have been put in place prior to commencing operations. Intelligence “trip-wires” so to speak could have been established to alert the operational commander of changes in smuggling routes inside and outside of the operating area. Logistic support could have been planned from the beginning to support a much larger scale and range of operations. As a result of not properly identifying the space, the smugglers have dictated the space and operating area thus forcing us to react.

The second issue regarding space that these two case studies highlight is properly recognizing and assessing the role that nations sharing adjacent territorial water to the operating area will play. Proper examination of this aspect of space can provide critical data regarding two of the questions the operational commander must ask prior to planning. Can MIO effectively produce the political objective or end state? What other instruments of national power will be required? As recent MIO have shown, such operations will be much more effective if nations sharing adjacent waters deny smugglers or sanction violators “safe haven” in or through the territorial seas. Often times this will require diplomatic relations above the operational commanders’ sphere of influence, both as a precursor and during operations. In many cases, such countries may not have the means to safe guard or defend their territorial seas. However, this does not negate the value of continued efforts to establish diplomatic or operational working relationships. Such efforts may facilitate access to continue pursuit or the interception of smugglers or sanction violators in or through neighboring countries’ territorial waters.

The U.S. has led the multi-national forces conducting MIO in the northern Arabian Gulf since the UN passed United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 661 and 665 in August 1990, imposing an economic embargo and enforcing it with maritime forces.<sup>14</sup> Using the textbook approach to space in evaluating the potential effectiveness for such a MIO, the typical planner might initially come to the conclusion that it could be very effective. After all, Iraq is primarily landlocked, has only two relatively small ports, a small amount of territorial seas, and therefore limited access to the Arabian (Persian) Gulf. Yet, such MIO operations over the past ten plus years have proven to be extremely challenging, costly, and often time frustrating for U.S. and multi-national forces tasked with enforcing them.

Although MIO in the Gulf have seized millions of tons of illegal oil being smuggled out of Iraq, the smugglers' ability to use Iranian territorial waters to stay clear of MIO assets has had the same effect as leaving the back pasture gate open. Appearing before the U.S. Senate, General Franks stated the following:

*For the last several years, Iranian naval forces have facilitated Iraqi maritime oil smuggling. This has made enforcing UN sanctions on Baghdad more difficult for the MIF. Iranian complicity has allowed Baghdad to smuggle on average 309,000 metric tons (or about 2.265 million barrels) of oil a month to world markets, primarily through Iranian coastal waters, earning Saddam Hussein in excess of \$500 million annually. These figures should, however, be seen in context...this year, the amount of oil smuggled through the Gulf has averaged less than 3 percent of total exports.<sup>15</sup>*

Other sources such as the Asian Times report as much as 200,000-400,000 barrels per day (bpd) are being smuggled out of the Gulf.<sup>16</sup> Regardless of the actual figures, as long as smugglers can obtain safe passage through Iranian waters, U.S. and multi-nation MIO efforts continued to be only partially effective. Instead of facing the challenge of containing merely

the northernmost portion of the Gulf, MIO assets have been forced to adapt to an increase in the operating area that encompasses the entire Gulf region.

Recently the effectiveness of MIO against Iraq has taken a considerable upswing. A Washington Times article reported the following in February 2002:

*...the Iranian Navy began cooperating in recent months with a U.S.-led interdiction fleet patrolling the Persian Gulf in an effort to seize Iraqi oil smuggled outside U.N. control. British diplomats said that Iranian, American and European vessels have been informally sharing information to help track oil smugglers as they weave in and out of Iranian and international waters.*

*This effort has contributed to a steep decline in illicit oil exports through the Persian Gulf, from 20.8 million barrels in 2000 to about 11.6 million barrels during the past year. U.N. diplomats say that Adm. Charles W Moore, who heads the maritime interdiction force and is the Commander of the U.S. Fifth Fleet, would like to see the contacts expanded.<sup>17</sup>*

Although these Iranian efforts may very well have been in their own economic interests, they have illustrated just how much of an impact having at least informal working relations with nations sharing adjacent waters has on the success of MIO. I think they also raise some significant questions regarding the initial planning and execution of these operations over the last ten years. Was the role the Iranian Navy would play in MIO against Iraq accurately estimated and accounted for in the planning stages of the operations? If so, what diplomatic efforts were or could have been attempted to at least establish informal working relations with the Iranian Navy prior to 2001? If diplomatic relations could not convince Iran to support or at least remain neutral in regard to the MIO efforts, would MIO be effective enough to attain its ultimate political objective? As recent current events regarding this operation clearly demonstrate, understanding all aspects of space may be the key element in the success of MIO. Properly examining and understanding the role of nations sharing adjacent territorial waters to MIO areas also had a significant impact in CD operations.

The size of the operating area discussed before in respect to CD operations encompasses a large number of nations, islands and their associated territorial seas. As history has shown, any one of these nations can play a pivotal role in terms of denying safe haven for drug smugglers. As in the Persian Gulf, understanding the politics, capabilities and limitations of such nations has proven critical in determining if CD operations could be successful and identifying the type and degree of diplomacy required to support them. In 1996, the General Accounting Office (GAO) did a study on the interdiction efforts in the Caribbean which was ultimately presented to Congress. One of its six major findings was: “*According to the State Department and U.S. law enforcement officials, most Caribbean nations are cooperating in fighting drug trafficking. However, most Caribbean nations lack the resources and law enforcing capabilities and have some corruption problems that hamper their efforts to combat drug trafficking.*”<sup>18</sup> However, there are other ways in which diplomatic and operational relations can defend such nations’ sovereignty against drug smugglers. U.S. officials have improved interdiction efforts through bilateral agreements such as ship boarding/ship-rider agreements which allow the Coast Guard to help train and lead South American and Caribbean nations’ interception efforts.<sup>19</sup> Additionally, some agreements allow U.S. personnel to conduct anti-drug sea and air operations within the territorial water and airspace of such nations without going through the timely process of receiving diplomatic clearance.<sup>20</sup> As of May 2000, the U.S. had established twenty-two such bilateral agreements with South American and Caribbean nations.<sup>21</sup> Although such agreements are greatly improving CD effectiveness, they have been a long time in coming. Again, not understanding the complete space or operating area prior to the initial planning phase cost MIO efforts in terms of time. Had the role of nations sharing adjacent territorial waters been

realized during the operational commanders' initial net assessment, diplomacy efforts could have been initiated as a precursor or in conjunction with DOD planning efforts. Next I shall examine the factor of time.

### The Factor of Time

MIO readings highlight two aspects of time that warrant further evaluation. The first is recognizing or anticipating from the operational level, how long the operation will take to become effective. If this aspect can be more accurately estimated, it will provide insight to the operational commander regarding whether or not the MIO can meet the desired political objective in a reasonable amount of time, identification of the other instruments of national power that will have to be utilized, and methods to best employ operational functions. The second, although more critical at the tactical level in terms of execution, is the time associated with planning the maneuver of assets. A more complete estimate of this aspect will primarily influence shaping operational functions such as intelligence but may identify the need for national power in the form of diplomacy as well.

Although the time required for economic sanctions to achieve their desired influence or effect may be determined at the political, national, or international level, the operational commander must anticipate or make assumptions in regard to how long it will take for the assets assigned to become effective in conducting MIO. This is a vital ingredient in the initial operational planning phase. The length of the operation will have an influence on what forces need to be assigned and sustained. Also, the length of the operation is directly proportional to the costs associated with it, both in terms of dollars and assets available for other operations. It is amazing that with the U.S. having conducted CD operations since the

early 1970's, that the NDCS goal for 2002 is only a ten percent reduction in the amount of drugs reaching the U.S. using 1996 levels as a baseline.<sup>22</sup> Did we correctly anticipate how long it would take for CD MIO efforts to have the desired effect? In my opinion the answer is no. Had the operational commanders or politicians been advised that CD efforts would take over twenty years to produce a ten percent reduction, they would have demanded changes in terms of asserting national power and defining the operational functions. Similarly, the same could be said for the sanctions against Iraq. Only by thoroughly examining the factor of time can the operational commander project and plan an effective scheme of maneuver utilizing national power and operational functions.

One aspect that directly influences how long it will take for MIO to become effective is anticipating how the smugglers will react. As history has demonstrated, the longer such operations take the more adaptive and creative the smugglers or sanction violators have become. As mentioned earlier, smugglers have become masters at adapting their routes. Since CD operations started, smuggling routes have included both direct and indirect routes to the Coast of Florida and the Gulf of Mexico; through such islands as Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and Puerto Rico as smuggling hubs; overland through Mexico; and most recently to the Eastern Pacific to name a few.<sup>23</sup> Such shifts have proven extremely costly for U.S. CD operational commanders in terms of the time associated with obtaining new intelligence capabilities and information, re-stationing D&M assets, and redeploying intercept forces and their associated support units. As highlighted by Rear Admiral Riutta, USCG, the drug cartels have also had the money to buy and utilize new technology:

*The availability of illegal drugs in America will be more difficult to counter as advanced equipment and technology are increasingly employed by global and regional drug cartels. Such Capabilities as radar-evading boats and aircraft, high endurance “go-fast”*

*boats, and sophisticated counter-information technologies will enable drug cartels to challenge current law enforcement capabilities.<sup>24</sup>*

Clearly, the longer MIO take to become effective and achieve their intended end-state, the more ingenious counter MIO efforts become. Often this results in a war of time and cost between U.S. and multi-national MIO efforts pitted against international and regional drug cartels. By identifying the possible courses of action the smugglers may take prior to the planning phase, the operational commander may be able to implement mitigating factors. Often times these will come from shaping the operational functions. In this case, operational intelligence could have been developed to target indicators of the expected smuggler courses of action, giving the operational commander the necessary queuing to commence contingency plans or implement an operational branch.

As alluded to earlier, time also is an integral factor in the operational commanders' decision and planning of the appropriate scheme of maneuver. Most MIO efforts rely on three stages: intelligence cuing, detection and monitoring, and ultimately the intercept or "end-game". The time between these stages is largely a function of the "size", or distances involved and the "force", or number of assets assigned. CD operations in the Caribbean became even more time sensitive with the smugglers' use of "go-fast" boats. These boats have continued to be developed over the years in terms of range, speed, and stealth. Today, these multi-engine boats are 30 to 50 feet in length, carry 500 to 1,500 kilograms of cocaine with each trip, and account for carrying over eighty percent of the drugs moved through the Caribbean via maritime means.<sup>25</sup> Such technology has not been applied to the oil smuggling techniques out of Iraq, however this does not mean time is any less important. There, the success of MIO depends on the ability to make an intercept before the smuggler can reach the

safety of territorial waters, often times equating to less than 30 minutes. To accomplish this, the planning phase must develop a number of means for a successful end-game.

Obviously there are options available to the operational commander in regard to saving time in the execution of MIO. Increasing sensor range and capabilities, more efficient interagency support and information sharing, bi-lateral agreements allowing immediate access to territorial waters, better communications, and a common or shared operational picture are but a few tools available to the commander.<sup>26</sup> Of course such capabilities may or may not all be available. Still, without understanding the time associated or required to execute a successful scheme of maneuver such options or capabilities will not be given the appropriate consideration during the initial planning phase. Instead, they will have to be developed or integrated in reaction to advances in smuggling techniques and tactics, costing additional time and effort. The type of maneuver and forces required leads directly to the factor of force.

### The Factor of Force

The factor of force, that is the forces and assets required to successfully conduct MIO, is contingent upon an accurate assessment of space and time. Additionally, the operational commander may be charged with incorporating forces from allies or coalition partners. The fact that the majority of MIO operations the U.S. has participated in over the past decade have been joint and combined from the beginning also requires the close attention of the operational commander.<sup>27</sup> Current efforts highlight two areas the operational commander should focus on in the initial assessment and then incorporate in the planning of MIO:

bringing the right forces and capabilities to the theater, and identifying or anticipating the possible pitfalls associated with coalition operations.

Determining the right DOD assets to be utilized for MIO is not just a task for the tactical level commander. Although the Navy Lessons Learned database is filled with force, sensor, and technological recommendations for MIO operations at the tactical level, such innovations have historically taken considerable time to implement. A better method would be to expand the initial assessment to include trend analysis to predict tactics or changes thereof. Only then will the operational commander be able to fully recognize and forward the necessary force requirements. In order to accomplish this, operational functions may need to be shaped to optimally achieve the desired objective. For example, the commanders' staff will need to incorporate experts with tactical experience and the proper intelligence support. In CD operations such force recommendations were incorporated as operations progressed and expanded. Many times they took the form of new project funding, new joint tactics and new relationships being developed. For example, such changes as stationing USCG Law Enforcement Detachments (LEDET) on U.S. Navy ships to further extend MIO efforts, charging DOD as the lead agency for all D&M counter drug operations, and funding Maritime Interdiction Support Vessels with Deployable USCG Pursuit Boats to better match the speed of "go-fasts" required JCS or even congressional level authorization and approval.<sup>28</sup> Force requirements are bound to change over the course of operations, but such changes take considerable time to implement and in an effort to make MIO more effective they should be more adequately anticipated. The best way to accomplish this is to properly staff the operational command, coordinate interagency assets, and utilize intelligence to develop a complete commanders' initial net assessment that is more proactive than reactive.

Regardless of how accurate the initial assessment and pursuing force requirement recommendations may be, the operational commander must recognize and plan for the fact that they will not always get everything they ask for. One of the lessons learned in the Adriatic during operation Sharp Guard, was amphibious ships with boats, craft, flight decks, and SEAL platoons embarked made excellent maritime interdiction assets.<sup>29</sup> Such potential could be applied to further MIO, perhaps in the Gulf against Iraq, however it must be recognized there are a limited number of such assets to which other missions are already assigned. It is ultimately up to the operational commander to anticipate, plan, and prioritize for the possibility of conflicting operations and tasks within the same operating area. For example, units in the Arabian Gulf were often tasked with supporting air defense operations while at the same time conducting MIO. CD MIO efforts are consolidated or otherwise adjusted to simultaneously handle crises such as the mass migrations from Haiti and Cuba in the mid 1990's.<sup>30</sup> To facilitate an all encompassing MIO plan, conflicting tasking and missions must also be predicted and assessed. Often, such plans will require properly staffing the joint command to ensure coordination of interagency assets and achieve the desired synergistic effect.

The benefits of properly manning and incorporating interagency assets under a single operational commander have not always been recognized prior to commencing MIO. CD MIO efforts eventually showed the need for the coordination of assets outside of just the Coast Guard and DOD. Again sighting the GAO study from 1996, the sixth conclusion stated; "*the executive branch has not developed a regional plan to implement the U.S. anti-drug strategy, staffed interagency organizations with key roles in the interdiction program, or resolved issues related to intelligence sharing.*"<sup>31</sup> It seems the concept of interagency

coordination was quickly taken to heart. Appearing before Senate Judiciary Committee, Rear Admiral Shkor stated, “*Our focus is to engage in cooperative interagency efforts to achieve breakthrough-level results, through linking interdiction and investigation to permanently dismantle smuggling organizations.*”<sup>32</sup> Such coordination of efforts, especially in terms of intelligence, clearly expanded the role and capabilities of the operational commander. Additionally, the benefit of such interagency cooperation seems to have been recognized and incorporated even further under the umbrella of homeland defense and LIO.

As previously stated, recent MIO has been primarily joint and combined. This trend also seems to be growing. Consider the fact that following the 9/11 catastrophe, the U.S. had some 30 of the approximate 70 ships involved in the LIO efforts searching the seas for escaping Al Queda. Coalition naval forces made up the additional 40 ships.<sup>33</sup> Such multi-national operations bring a slew of additional tasks and requirements for the operational commander. Aside from the obvious and well documented communication, technology, and intelligence sharing challenges associated with multi-national or coalition MIO, there are further challenges. Differences in Rules of Engagement (ROE), dual chains of command, conflicting national tasking, and limits regarding acceptable operating areas are all issues which face the operational commander.<sup>34</sup> Such differences simply cannot be left to be “worked-out” at the tactical level. In fact they may require diplomatic negotiations even above the operational level. Regardless, at a minimum the operational commander must identify and assess these challenges prior to formulating a MIO plan. After assessing this aspect of force, the operational commander will be better able to answer the three fundamental questions; more effectively shape operational functions, and request additional national power, in the form of diplomatic assistance and clarification.

## Recommendations

One possible argument to my thesis is that there are other elements of operational art that are more applicable to MIO than the operational factors of time, space, and force. For the operational commander just assigned to plan a MIO, his initial publication review might lead him to Joint Publications 3-07, Joint Doctrine for Military Operations Other Than War (MOOTW). This publication delineates six MOOTW principles; objective, unity of effort, security, restraint, perseverance, and legitimacy. It especially puts emphasis on the last three.<sup>35</sup> Although I do not question the validity of these elements, especially during the execution of MIO, I believe examination of operational factors should come as a precursor to their consideration during the planning phase.

Another possible challenge to my argument is “aren’t the operational factors of space, time, and force already being considered?” After all, these factors are not new concepts. To this point I would argue two points. The first is that a full assessment of the space, time, and force factors has not yet been completed or appreciated until MIO efforts were already well underway. Additionally, as shown by the CD operations and during the MIO effects against Iraq, changes in the size of the operating area, shifts in smuggling tactics and techniques, the time required for MIO to become effective, and the type and composition of forces that would be required were not fully analyzed or anticipated to be able to be incorporated into the MIO planning. The net result has been time lost in achieving the political objective and failure in terms of economy of force.

Not only has the full assessment come too late, the initial assessment of space, time, and force has not been robust or thorough enough. To achieve its full potential, the initial

evaluation of the operational factors must be able to answer three questions: Can MIO effectively produce the political objective or end state? What other instruments of national power will also be required? How will operational functions need to be tailored or implemented to make the operation more effective? Such a net assessment may in fact force the operational commander to revisit the cost benefit of MIO as an instrument of policy with the policy makers. It will help identify key components of national power, such as diplomacy and bilateral agreements that need to be requested and incorporated in the planning phase. Finally, operational functions such as intelligence, interagency coordination, and establishing the ideal command structure will also be products of a more accurate net assessment that will more effectively complete the planning phase of the operation.

Through this paper I have not merely listed a number of things that we have not done well while planning and conducting MIO. I have identified aspects of the initial assessment that could have been analyzed more completely. To demonstrate the value added from this initial assessment I have identified facets of national power and operational functions that can be recognized and implemented to make MIO planning more effective given a more thorough initial assessment. The end goal is to reduce the time MIO take to become effective in attaining the political objectives.

## Conclusion

Over the last decade U.S. Navy and Coast Guard assets have been utilized in MIO perhaps more than any other maritime mission area. Despite its popularity as an instrument of policy, such operations have not had overwhelming success. Perhaps such results can be associated with MIO being characterized as a MOOTW. Perhaps they are not given the same

consideration as military operations that enable the operational commander to bring to bear the full force and fire-power potential that our maritime forces possess. Regardless, MIO does not seem to be going away. In fact, as MIO has recently expanded to LIO and homeland defense, it continues to grow both in size and complexity. The severity of the threat does not allow such operations the luxury of taking over a decade or more to become effective. The American public expects and deserves much more from its maritime military assets. We have an obligation to make MIO more effective in attaining the desired end state and making it a viable political tool. In our quest to make MIO more effective I feel we need to return to the fundamentals of operational art and widen the scope of the situational assessment. I propose we use a more thorough assessment of the factors of space, time, and force in each scenario to determine if MIO can be an effective means to attain our political objectives.

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## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Department of the Navy, The Commander's Handbook on the Law of Naval Operations, Naval Warfare Publication 1-14M (Norfolk, VA: October 1995), 7-7.

<sup>2</sup> Jeremy Stocker, "Nonintervention, Limited Operations in the Littoral Environment", Naval War College Review, (Naval War College Press: Autumn 1998), 51.

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